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ABSTRACT

The School BUS (bottom-up simple) model for school accountability uses local standards-based assessment data to improve schoolwide performance during the year, and from year to year. This system derives its ideas from abundant professional literature about successful school renewal. A local accountability process should link changes in school practices to changes in student achievement. The School BUS's four major components--standards-based assessments, school culture, schoolwide instructional practices, and student results--are called "wheels" because each component moves continually through its own cycle of improvement. A school can use the four wheels to embark on a journey of continuous improvement. Use of standards-based assessment data is a key element. Teachers and their principal, the professionals who work directly with the students, should be empowered to make the decisions about how best to help all students succeed. The approach calls for a balance in the underlying systems: balance the core practices used by all teachers with ample flexibility for addressing individual students' needs and interests; balance the core decisions at one level of the management system with guidance and decisions at a higher level; find convergence between what is most important on the state test and what are the most valued concepts and skills in the local community; and make immediate, meaningful step-by-step improvements in teacher and student. (Contains 6 pages of references.) (DFR)

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